

## LGBT+ Inclusion in the Episcopal Church

Session 1 Notes – Scripture interpretation

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### Background Reading:

- A detailed look at scriptures that are used to condemn LGBT people, by Walter Wink [https://reconcilingworks.org/images/stories/downloads/resources/003\\_Homosexuality\\_and\\_the\\_Bible-Wink.pdf](https://reconcilingworks.org/images/stories/downloads/resources/003_Homosexuality_and_the_Bible-Wink.pdf)
- A look at some of the different things the bible says about sex: <https://www.queertheology.com/bible-says-sex/>
- A look at the harm of conversion therapy: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>
- Book of Common Prayer Page 848-849 – What is Sin?

### Frameworks to help inform the church's position of LGBT+ inclusion

- The bulk of scripture, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the witness of the saints, shows God to be: loving, life-giving, and liberating.
- Jesus did not condemn "homosexuality"
- Jesus sought out and accepted outcasts and restored them to relationship with God and the community
- Jesus' most harsh condemnation is for those who would keep the poor, suffering, and outcasts from drawing near to God.
- Sin is broken relationship with God, and harm to self or others. There are many ways to sin with relationship to sex, but loving consensual sexual experience is not sinful.

### Historical/cultural/literary interpretation of scripture

- Walter Wink "There is no biblical sex ethic. The Bible knows only a love ethic."
- There was no word or concept for a loving relationship between people of the same gender, or of expression of gender identity.
- Different ideas about sex are expressed throughout scripture, which we find abhorrent today:
  - Rapists must marry their victims. *Deuteronomy 22:28-29*
  - Men with multiple wives and/or adultery: Abraham, Jacob, Enoch, etc.
  - Servant/slave women were forced to bear children for/by their masters: Abraham, Jacob
- There were also other prohibitions we do not abide by today:
  - Women having sex while menstruating, spilling seed
- Punishments for sexual behavior is often about property rights (women as property). Adultery is determined by the marital status of the woman, not the man.
- Semen was seen as containing the whole of the life force, so "spilling" it for any purpose except procreation was an act against life.
- We do not follow all the laws from the Torah, i.e. slavery, and eye for an eye, no cloth of blended fibers, no pork, put sorcerers to death... etc.
- Paul in Romans is using a literary example of a group of people who committed many sins, Romans 1:26-32, but his use of this list is to condemn not the sinner but those who judge (argument concludes in 2:1) "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are when you judge others."